for 1993-94 to improve the viability of industrial projects including iron and steel projects.

(4) Reduction of customs duty on raw materials such as refractories and ferro alloys to reduce production costs of steel.

The impact of these measures will also continue into the Ninth Five Year Plan.

(c) and (d) In a study conducted by Metallurgical and Engineering Consultants (India) Limited (MECON) various measures were identified for technological upgradation of electric arc furnace units in the country. These include introduction of high power transformers, oxygen assisted melting, secondary refining, continuous casting etc. Since electric are furnace units are mostly in the private sector, the initiative for technological upgradation has to come from the units themselves. To facilitate import of technology, iron and steel industry has been included in the list of high priority industries. This enables iron and steel units to freely import technology within certain specified norms.

Production cost of Steel

613. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to introduce a package of measures aimed at reducing the capital and production costs of steel; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) The budget proposals for 1993-94 contain measures aimed at reducing the capital & production costs of industrial projects including steel plants. These include lowering of customs duty on project imports and reduction of minimum interest rate on commercial advances. Besides, reduction of customs duty on imported raw materials & consumables like pig iron, ferrow-alloys, refractories, graphite electrodes etc. will also reduce the production costs of steel.

Visakhapatnam Steel Plant

614. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a circular was issued during last November by the Management of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant in regard to salaries of employees; and

(b) if so what are the detalls thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) The Management of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant has reported that keeping in view its difficult financial position, there was apprehension about some delay in the payment of salaries of the employees for the month of November, 1992. As a precautionary measure and in accordance with the provisions of payment of Wages Act, the Management had addressed the concerned authorities. It was also brought to the notice of the recognised union of employees and also displayed on the Notice Board. The salaries for the month of November, 1992 were however disbursed on the due date.

Modernisation of IISCO

615. PROF. SAURIN BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a decision regarding modernisation of Indian Iron and Steel Company Limited either by private parties or by Government itself;

(b) whether it is a fact that delay in taking a decision is harming the industry; and

(c) if so, the facts and reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The resultant delay is in view of Government's desire to launch successfully the programme of modernisation/expansion of Indian Iron and Steel Co. Ltd.

Heavy Stock of coke in Visakhapatnam Steel Plant

616. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant has been carrying heavy stock of the coke produced out of imported coal involving huge foreign exchange;

(b) if so, what are the quantity-wise details of foundry grade coke, nut coke and Braaze coke;

(c) whether it is a fact that instead of sale of public sector undertakings the coke is being sold in the open market at lower cost than its cost of production;

(d) if so, the reasons thereof;

(e) why this much of coke was produced with imported coal if it was not required;

(f) whether it is a fact that on making lower rate of payment of bridge coke, the nut coke is being sold through some middle man; and

(g) if so, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) Foundry Grade Coke is not produced at Visakhapatnam Steel plant. The stock as on 1.4.1993 of Blast Furnace Hard coke was 25,000 onnes only. The stocks of Nut Coke and Breeze Coke were 20,000 tonnes and 33,000 tonnes respectively.

(c) to (g) Coke Battery-1 was commissioned six months prior to the commissioning of Blast Furnace-1 and two batteries were in operation for single blast furnace operation. Since optimum levels of coke oven pushing had to be maintained for the health of the batteries and also to meet the requirement of coke oven gas in different units of the plant, surplus coke was generated which has resulted in a stock build up of 92,000 tonnes as on 1.4.1992. 6,731 tonnes of BF Hard Coke was sold to Tata Iron and Steel Co., 6,815 tonnes to Kalinga Iron Works and balance to Bokaro Steel Plant during 1992-93. Nut coke was sold to Kalinga Iron Works and Sandhur Manganese who are direct users. Substantial quantities of coke breeze was sold to Hindustan Zinc Ltd. As no other Public Sector Undertaking requires coke breeze or coke dust, these are being sold directly to the users. The selling price of coke is higher than the works cost which includes materials and operating cost.

Lack of civic amenities in Kondly, Delhi

617. SHRI MOHINDER SINGH LATHER:

SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA:

Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in Pocket A-1/DDA flats, Kondli's civic amenities were withdrawn following the handling over the pocket to MCD in December, 1992 along with other DDA colonies;

(b) whether it is also a fact that since than despite various represen-